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A.NOLEN

Assaulting Mt. Helicon: Writing and Current Affairs.

monthly archives: AUGUST 2014

GOODWILL BURNER

Last week I posted about Benny Johnson's firing from BuzzFeed: Who Did Benny Johnson Tick Off? This post got a bit of attention, eliciting predictable responses from BuzzFeed's Ben Smith and Gawker's J.K. Trotter. I even got @blippoblappo to laugh!

However, while @blippoblappo was laughing, he/she was also typing furiously.

@blippoblappo and @crushingbort, proprietors of the blog which allowed Ben Smith and J.K. Trotter to take down Benny Johnson, were busy preparing a smear on Farheed Zakaria. I guess they took my criticisms seriously and decided that a blog 'on Journalism' ought to talk about somebody else *besides* Benny Johnson. One day after my post regarding 'Our Bad Media', @blippoblappo and @crushingbort rushed out this monstrosity: Did CNN, The Washington Post, and TIME Actually Check Fareed Zakaria's Work For Plagiarism?

I call this post a monstrosity because many of the instances of accused 'plagiarism' involve Zakaria quoting statistics. Although Zakaria should have said where the numbers came from in every instance, this type plagiarism is small fry in the larger trend of theft that 'Our Bad Media' claims to be fighting.

@blippoblappo and @crushingbort: it feels like you're scraping the barrel. Is re-shaming Fareed Zakaria the most pressing issue in the universe of journalistic plagiarism?

I have little respect for Zakaria, he typifies soft establishment journalism. However, I find it difficult to believe that Zakaria's (mis)use of statistics constitutes egregious 'undiscovered' plagiarism, or that they are extraordinary examples of plagiarism amongst journalists in general. I think that there are worse instances of high-profile plagiarism out there, but there probably aren't many high-profile targets as **soft** as Fareed, whose career was very publicly blighted by plagiarism back in 2012. Fareed is an easy target.

It seems that many 'Our Bad Media' readers agree with me. Out of the 34 comments their first post generated, here are some gems:

> *It's one thing to plagiarize the written expression of ideas, quite another to cite statistics. Seems to me, Zakaria is just lazy, restating numerical data and statistics, using someone else's words. The bar is much lower, IMO. I thou doth protest too much.*

And…

> *This is ridiculous. Almost every example you cite are statistics or quotes. We're supposed to be outraged? Don't quit your day job hacks.*

Not only did @blippoblappo's and @crushingbort's attack on Zakaria not get them love, it didn't get them quality press either. They knew that they had to to better, so the next day on August 20th, they published How And Why Lying About Plagiarism Is Bad – A Response To Fareed Zakaria And Fred Hiatt; followed by The Paste-American World: How Fareed Zakaria Plagiarized In His International Bestseller (And The Magazines He Used To Run) on August 22nd.

The first one of those garnered all of four comments, each one dripping with support for @blippoblappo and @crushingbort. It also promised that "Our Bad Media will have more extensive examples of plagiarism by Fareed Zakaria later this week."

Those extensive examples came from Zakaria's book *The Post-American World* and two articles from Foreign Affairs and Newsweek. Even though @blippoblappo and @crushingbort felt their previous work held up "pretty well", they piled these instances of plagiarism on top of the mess, and added a few off-topic attacks, such as the following:

> Post-American World *can be best described up as the kind of book your dad bought at the airport to kill time reading about This Changing Planet Of Ours, then bought again later because it had a* 2.0 *at the end, the way his phone's fart noise app did when it added new fart noises.*

The last post generated 13 comments which, again, are dripping support for @blippoblappo and @crushingbort. See a pattern? Our anonymous bloggers are on the defensive.

I have no doubt that Fareed Zakaria is a plagiarist. He's also a lazy journalist who habitually paraphrases other writers so that he doesn't have to do work himself. Everybody knows this; it's old news. Zakaria is a *very* safe target for @blippoblappo and @crushingbort to attack, and they've clearly done a minimal amount of work to do so.

In conclusion, attacking the shoddy journalist Fareed Zakaria is an easy 'n' fast way for @blippoblappo and @crushingbort to 'prove' that they don't just have a 'boner' for Benny.

I'd like to remind readers that @blippoblappo and @crushingbort said they didn't have a clear agenda when they began their crusade against Benny Johnson last month. Consider this quote from their article with Talking Points Memo:

> ***TPM: Do you plan to continue scrutinizing BuzzFeed?***
>
> @crushingbort: *This was all done on a whim and I'm not sure what we do next, but this isn't meant to be some kind of anti-BuzzFeed initiative. Jesse Eisinger made a point I strongly agree with, which is that plagiarism is far from the worst problem in journalism. But it seems to be the one of the few that editors respond to.*

Sometime after their take-down of Johnson– and *probably* after being called out as hired hacks by yours truly– @blippoblappo and @crushingbort decided a half-assed assault on well-known plagiarist Fareed Zakaria was a good idea.

@blippoblappo and @crushingbort: how's this all working out for you?

I look forward to @blippoblappo's and @crushingbort's next attempt to spin a career out of their sloppy 'Benny' job.

P.S. @BennyJohnson has been a very quiet twitter account since July 26th. Does BuzzFeed have Benny Johnson on such a tight contract that he can't talk about his experiences? That kinda goes against BuzzFeed's informal, fun-loving image, doesn't it? Have 1000 BuzzFeed lawyers made sure that no Peretti creation will ever go rogue against the outlet? Is my source for fuzzy cat pics really an authoritarian bully?

Thank you, buzzgasm.com

LEAVE A COMMENT

PSA: TOR VULNERABILITY REPORTING PROCEDURE

A few weeks ago a.nolen reader Hubri5 alerted me to the sorry fate of two Tor researchers from Carnegie Mellon who didn't ask the Department of Defense for permission to talk about their work on de-anonymizing the Tor network. These researchers, Alexander Volynkin and Michael McCord, had their Black Hat 2014 talk cancelled at the 11th hour; the talk was titled "You don't have to be the NSA to break Tor: de-anonymising users on a budget".

That's *bad behavior* folks– bad behavior on the part of Volynkin and McCord. Always get permission from the DoD or The Tor Project before talking about Tor vulnerabilities. **Tor must maintain the trust of its users– this is a matter of national security.**

I don't want to harp on the negative, so I'm going to talk about one company who did things right by Tor, and it seems, gave up valuable digital forensic analysis business in the process. Digital Forensics Solutions LLC is a New Orleans-based company that captures digital evidence for its customers, who presumably include law enforcement.

The driving force behind Digital Forensics is– or was, cause he's not currently listed on their website– researcher Andrew Case. Case wrote a clever add-on for open-source memory analysis toolkit Volatility, which lets users reconstruct files even when 'criminals' have taken security precautions by only using random access memory on their machines. Case was able to reconstruct files even after they'd been scrambled by popular 'live cd' operating systems like Tor's TAILs, Ubuntu or BackTrack.

Even though Case makes a living by exploiting the technological edge of digital forensics, he chose to give up that edge by making his research known to the wider world, and in particular, The Tor Project. Why, Case?

> *"You know with Tor, they deal in a lot of countries where there aren't warrants or anything, so it's, uh, it can be hectic."*

For Andrew Case, and Digital Forensics Solutions LLC, global citizenship trumps the profit motive. Tor helps places that, uh, don't have warrants,

like we have warrants in America. Case and his employer share that same wide-eyed altruism that inspired Operation Iraqi Freedom!

I've embedded a video of Case giving an 'update' to his Black Hat 2011 talk titled De-Anonymizing Live CDs through Physical Memory Analysis. This Black Hat talk **was not pulled**, because as Andrew explains in the video below, he contacted the appropriate players first. [Good stuff starts after 7:40. Not Work Safe.]

> *Q: So what did TAILs do to mitigate forensic analysis?*
>
> *Case: So this is actually pretty interesting. When the abstract went online for the Black Hat talk it had mentioned TAILs, and analyzing the TAILs live cd, and it's something that immediately hit their developers' list and I emailed them and they started working on some stuff.*

Tor Vulnerability Researchers: All The Tor Project wants is to be given a heads-up, so they can spin the vulnerability to the media in a way that preserves the public's trust. As a Tor Project spokesman told the Guardian regarding Volynkin/McCord's pulled presentation:

> *Organisers from the Tor Project said they were working with the Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT) at Carnegie Mellon, which is sponsored by the US Department of Homeland Security, to release information on the problems identified by the researchers.*
>
> *"We did not ask Black Hat or CERT to cancel the talk. We did (and still do) have questions for the presenter and for CERT about some aspects of the research, but we had no idea the talk would be pulled before the announcement was made," said Tor Project president Roger Dingledine.*
>
> *"We never received slides or any description of what would be presented in the talk itself beyond what was available on the Black Hat webpage. Researchers who have told us about bugs in the past have found us pretty helpful in fixing issues, and generally positive to work with."*

Gee, Alexander Volynkin and Michael McCord, Tor is "generally positive" to work with. Just do the right thing already! Think of all those crying babies in Iran who don't have, like, warrants. You can read more about Roger Dingledine, Tor's president, here.

In the video interview I've embedded above, Andrew Case goes beyond the call of duty to plug The Tor Project's ability to fix the vulnerability he discovered how to exploit:

> *"The first thing they [Tor/TAILs developers] do– as we talked about before, if you can pull the plug on the machine or just get memory wiped somehow, then there's no evidence of what you did. So the first thing they did is like they implemented, it's called K-exec, I'm not sure what it stands for, but what it lets you do is move it [the data? a.nolen] to another kernel, you know, another Linux kernel while you're already in Linux without rebooting the machine.*
>
> *So what they do at that point, when you tell it to shutdown, instead of only shutting it down and hoping that RAM clears itself, it boots into this minimal K-exec kernel, then goes back and wipes all the memory for you, that you were using. You know, overwrites it multiple times. So at that point, you know, memory is really gone, fairly instantly, as soon as you're done using the system as opposed to hoping that the hardware is going to do that for you.*
>
> *That was the first thing. And I think two weeks ago there was another TAILs release and that's actually in there. And the second one was … I'm not sure it's done yet, their project page was confusing… what they want want to do is whether using a CD or a USB stick, is as soon as you pull the USB stick out or hit the eject button on the CD, it boots into a separate, it uses a UDEV rule to see the device activities happening, and from there they go back and wipe all the memory again, sort of without waiting for the machine to cycle down– so if the door's getting kicked in you just pull the USB drive out and your machine starts erasing itself and there really is no evidence of what you did."*

It's interesting how Andrew, who makes a living by undoing the work TAILs claims to do, can go on to plug the Tor Project's ability to undermine his own work in turn. To put this in perspective, imagine a narc glowing over Los Zetas' ability to cover their distribution networks. *The drug world can get 'hectic', but those Zetas deal in places where there's no other way to become a billionaire…* There's something insincere in your Tor promotion, Andrew. Sometimes I feel like everybody's on the

same team.

On the face of it, Digital Forensics' decision to throw away the competitive edge may appear to be a poor business decision. However, things become a little more clear when you consider who Andrew Case's boss is: Daryl Pfeif, CEO of Digital Forensics Solutions LLC.

"Daryl Pfeif is drawn to emerging and useful technology like a moth to the flame."

I lifted that cheeky little avatar from the 'Board of Directors' page of the Digital Forensic Research Workshop or 'DFRWS' [*no idea where the 'S' comes from- a.nolen*]. This is her full blurb from the DFRWS website:

> ***Daryl Pfeif***
>
> *Chief Executive Officer, Digital Forensics Solutions, New Orleans, LA*
> *Daryl Pfeif is drawn to emerging and useful technology like a moth to the flame. She attended her first Digital Forensics Research Workshop in 2004 and they haven't been able to get rid of her since. She is the co-founder of http://www.DigitalForensicsSolutions.com and has over fifteen years of experience as a communications technology consultant and lead project manager in both the public and private sectors.*

The DFRWS was started by the Air Force Research Laboratory (AFRL) Defensive Information Warfare Branch. Daryl is the skirt on the board, which also includes MITRE's Eoghan Casey who "supports forensic R&D at the DoD's Cyber Crime Center (DC3/DCCI)" and Wietse Venema, who writes forensic analysis software for IBM.

MITRE is a *grotesque* US government research institute/think tank, which spearheads the 'Insider Threat Initiative', through which government employees are encouraged to rat on any co-worker who "expresses unhappiness with U.S. foreign policy" or shows sympathy for the "underdog".

IBM has written *a lot* of social network analysis software, which a.nolen reader E. Oop alerted me to. **[Thank you, E. Oop!]** The jewel in IBM's 'Facebook' crown is Analyst's Notebook, which you can read about in this article comparing IBM's product with that of their competitor, Sentinel Visualizer. Sentinel Visualizer is partly funded by In-Q-Tel, the CIA's venture capital firm. The beauty of market forces + government money!

So those are Ms. Pfeif's, er, bedfellows… suddenly it becomes clear to me why Andrew Case was so eager to give up his firm's competitive advantage. Unfortunately, in real life the good guys don't always win, and Digital Forensic Solutions' website hasn't been updated since 2012.

P.S. Wouldn't it be 'sooo NSA' if the US gov could watch every file unscrambled by folks using Volatility software… #tinfoil!

LEAVE A COMMENT

WHO DID BENNY JOHNSON TICK OFF?

Adobe Flash Player or an HTML5 supported browser is required for video playback.
Get the latest Flash Player
Learn more about upgrading to an HTML5 browser

Benny Johnson talks about what job he'd like to have more than Political Editor @ BuzzFeed.

A couple of weeks ago Benny Johnson, the pseudo-conservative political pundit, was let go from BuzzFeed for plagiarism. Apparently Johnson has been a gratuitous plagiarizer for more than a year. Nobody seemed to care before July 24th, when Benny's career came to

screeching halt. What happened?

The story goes that on July 24th two no-name twitter dudes, @crushingbort and @blippoblappo, set up a WordPress blog, 'Our Bad Media', listing instances of Benny's obvious plagiarism. *Miraculously*, J.K. Trotter of Gawker found 'Our Bad Media' on *the very day of its first post* and wrote an article about Benny's bad behavior. Trotter's Gawker article caught BuzzFeed editor Ben Smith's attention, resulting in Benny's being fired.

Plagiarism is bad, but it's not the astounding part of this story. What's amazing is that the bloggers, @crushingbort and @blippoblappo, expect the public to believe their take-down of Johnson was: "just something two people with some spare time did on a whim after it seemed like it'd probably be more than just a shot in the dark."

Benny Johnson's firing seemed fishy to me from the git-go and insincere statements like the one above have prompted me to investigate the various players involved in Benny's saga.

The anonymous bloggers, @crushingbort and @blippoblappo, say they were motivated by Johnson's self-righteous tweets accusing IJReview of plagiarism after IJReview *did* plagiarize a widely-read and snarky article by Johnson, which mocked George Bush Sr.'s unfortunate sock-style. As ever with Benny Johnson, the mockery was subtle and posed as a tounge-in-cheek compliment to Bush I, no doubt why IJReview picked it up. IJReview *didn't get the joke*, and pulled the article (apparently) after Johnson called them out on their plagiarism.

> *Repeat after me: Copying and pasting someone's work is called "plagiarism" http://t.co/0lk1dPXq1O*
>
> *— Benny (@bennyjohnson) July 23, 2014*

Johnson's cutting remark to IJReview, the supposed-political-ally of 'whiter than white' Benny, launched @crushingbort's and @blippoblappo's crusade against Benny and ended Benny's BuzzFeed career.

> *"@crushingbort: It [the attack blog, Our Bad Media] was definitely prompted by Johnson tweeting about the IJReview."*

@crushingbort's and @blippoblappo's web-chronicle of Johnson plagiarism spans a grand total of two days, 24-25th July, and the blog hasn't been updated since. ('Our Bad Media' claims to be 'on Journalism', but it only talks about Benny.)

Our Bad Media's J.K. Trotter/Gawker connection smells, especially because of the *timing* of Trotter's July 24th article, which outed Benny as a plagiarist. Trotter's Gawker (NYC-based) article was published at 2:16 pm (EST) on the same day as @crushingbort's and @blippoblappo's first post! (That's three hours BEFORE the first comment on the blog (time-stamped 5:24 pm) if the blog is East Coast, but five hours ahead if the blog is West Coast! By the 'Our' in 'Our Bad Media' I presume the blog is American.)

Not only was J.K. Trotter remarkably ahead of the WordPress curve, but Trotter had time 1) to contact BuzzFeed's Ben Smith for a statement *and receive a reply* 2) notice that BuzzFeed articles had been altered after his initial contact with Ben Smith and 3) get his article about Benny Johnson's plagiarism-oopsy through Gawker's editorial process before 2:16pm on July 24th. Trotter's a fast worker! Be careful, J.K., rushing is what got Benny into trouble…

Let's recap the chain of events: two disinterested citizens do two days of blogging which 1) get BuzzFeed's attention by the first day and 2) leads BuzzFeed to fire an editor on the second. Wow. That's got to be some type of record.

Johnson's editors, lead by Ben Smith, took less than 48 hours to fire him. Somebody on BuzzFeed's 'editorial' mailing list leaked Ben Smith's 'We Fired Benny' email to Gawker's J.K. Trotter within that 48 hours:

> *After carefully reviewing more than 500 of Benny's posts, we have 41 instances of sentences or phrases copied word for word from other sites. Benny is a friend, colleague and, at his best, a creative force. But we had no choice other than letting him go.*

More fast workers! Smith ends the note by undermining himself:

> *Tonight's decision is not a knee-jerk response to outside criticism, though we are genuinely grateful to the people who helped point out instances of plagiarism. Nor is it meant as a personal condemnation: Benny at his best is a creative force, and we wish him the best.* ***Finally, it is not a warning that you'll be fired for a small mistake or an isolated error. We will always have a more forgiving attitude toward bold failures, innocent errors, and misfired jokes than more skittish old media organizations.***

I agree with Ben Smith, there's nothing knee-jerk about Benny's firing. I believe that Benny got on the Bush Clan sh*t-list with his snide mockery of this prominent American family. Benny pushed the Bushes too far when he jeered at their media project, IJReview, which despite its bluster about page views, is struggling to be taken seriously.

Jeb Bush could stand you mocking his demented father, Benny, but hitting his pocketbook took things one step too far.

> *@bennyjohnson @ijreview http://t.co/rlYJwlgCwq u mad u got a story about socks copied while u stole ur story about north korea…but…*
>
> *— PUNK SPANK (@PUNKSPANK) July 24, 2014*

The twitter quote above is the earliest reference to 'Our Bad Media' I could find; it's time-stamped 10:12 am on July 24th. Notice how Benny's attack on IJReview came just one day before. @crushingbort and

@blippoblappo are fast workers too!

So, seriously folks, who'd Benny p*ss off?

Well… IJReview is a shell of a media outlet with only two staff members listed on their website: Bubba Atkinson (Editor in Chief) and Kyle Becker (managing editor). There are no current Staff Writers it seems, which makes sense, because IJReview appears to do nothing but aggregate internet content and turn it into 'click bait', making IJReview.com the most popular internet destination I've never heard of. DeathandTaxesMag.com:

> *The right wing has its own Upworthy knockoff. According to Quantcast, it's [IJReview's] quickly becoming more popular than Upworthy, and even conservative sites like Breitbart and The Daily Caller. It's called Independent Journal Review, though its name is a huge steaming turd of a lie, because it's neither a journal nor a review nor independent.*

More important than it's management, however, is that IJReview is funded by 27-year old Alex Skatell and 42-year old Phil Musser: IJReview is just one tool in their election-molding toolkit, ominously called 'Media Group of America'. This is how DeathAndTaxesMag.com describes IJReview's backing:

> *The site is funded by Alex Skatell (former staffer for the National Republican Senatorial Committee) and Phil Musser (a former Tim Pawlenty adviser). It's owned by Media Group of America, a conservative LLC which also runs consulting firm IMGE (which has worked with clients like Boeing and BMW) as well as Gravity, which manages technology and data for campaigns.*

Alex cut his teeth working for 1) liberals in Australia "as digital director for the Liberal Party of Australia and now Prime Minister Tony Abbott"; **and** 2) Republicans in the USA "as Director of New Media & Technology for the Republican Governors Association (RGA)".

Phil Musser is much more interesting: he's a creature of US Senator Mel Martinez, a Cuban-American power-broker who ran US government department HUD (The Department of Housing and Urban Development) from 2001-2003. HUD is a nexus of cronyism, theft and scandal: HUD's role in dubious mortgage repackaging schemes is part of what brought on the 2008 financial crisis in the USA.

Phil Musser also worked at HUD from 2001 to *some time* in 2004:

> *Phil served as Deputy Chief of Staff and Senior Policy Advisor of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. At HUD, Phil managed the development of public policy, a thirty billion dollar budget and served as a key liaison to the White House. Additionally, Phil coordinated intergovernmental relations and worked with many governors, mayors and local officials on important community housing issues.*

Musser left HUD at about the same time Mel Martinez did, in order to work on Martinez's political campaign!

> *In 2004, Phil served as a senior advisor to Senator Mel Martinez's successful U.S. Senate campaign in Florida and as a deputy director of the G-8 Summit in Sea Island, GA, for the U.S. Department of State.*

Mel Martinez got his start in politics by being a "pragmatic" friend of Florida Governor Jeb Bush. Jeb is the sock-loving George Bush Sr's second son, and father of Mexican-American political hopeful George P. Bush. **Martinez is a creature of the Bush Family; Musser is a creature of Martinez; IJReview is a creature of Musser.**

See where I'm going? The money that gave Mel Martinez his leg up *is probably behind* IJReview. That money *probably got tired* of Benny Johnson peeing on their ~~socks~~ pant-legs. So two bloggers, who'd rather not reveal their names, were paid to attack Benny Johnson (a poor-quality journalist and an easy target) for *two whole* days, giving BuzzFeed an excuse to fire him by the end of the second day.

> *@crushingbort: Jesse Eisinger made a point I strongly agree with, which is that plagiarism is far from the worst problem in journalism. But it seems to be the one of the few that editors respond to.*

The 'Our Bad Media' blog was made-to-measure!

If you're interested in reading what *probably* got Benny Johnson on Jeb Bush's radar, check out How To Thank a Soldier by George W. Bush, 23 Things I Learned Spending A Day With George H. W. Bush at The George Bush Library and BuzzFeed's celebrated A Gentleman's Guide to Picking Socks. That sock one was published three weeks ago, on July 22nd.

This is purely anecdotal, but I've heard that the Bush clan is vicious with their vendettas and has a very long memory. Benny, BuzzFeed's pseudo-conservative jester, has been making dangerous jokes at the Bushs' expense for one year at least. Check out:

A Gentleman's Guide To Picking Out Socks, As Told By George H.W. Bush

> ***George H.W. Bush is obsessed with socks.*** *He is even currently judging his own sock competition, run through his foundation. So what makes a good sock?*
>
> *"When friends discover your fondness for feisty footwear,*

they will question your taste…”

(Bush Foundation)

“…and possibly even your soundness of mind.”

(Bush Foundation)

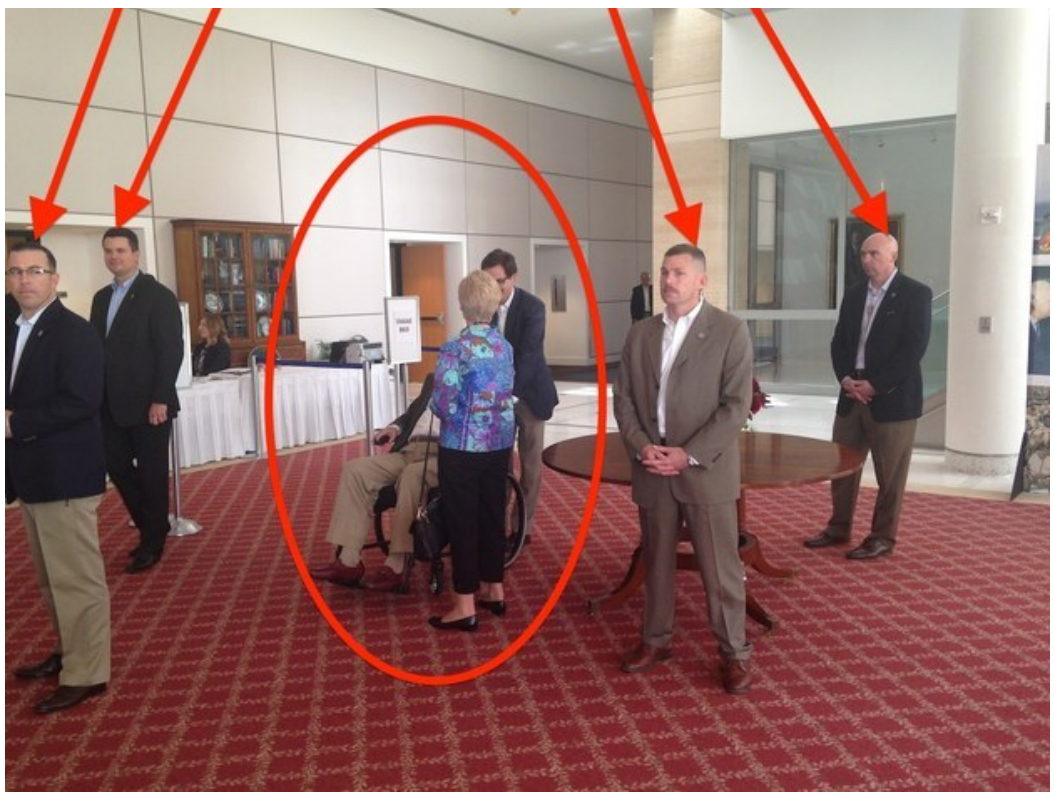
Ponder this little number from Benny’s trip to the Bush Library, in which Benny harps on the Bushs’ oil connections and discloses Bush security info, like the faces, size and movements of Bush Senior’s Secret Service detail (!?) How do you spell ‘threat’ in Washington, Benny? Hint: it doesn’t involved the letters B, S, H or U.

23 Things I Learned Spending A Day With George H.W. Bush At The George Bush Library

It would be prudent.

[I don’t know why the preceding short sentence was in Benny’s article header all by itself- a.nolen.]

17. Bush is always surrounded by four Secret Service men, even when he’s talking with a close friend.



[Is that friend Sally Shelton-Colby?! -a.nolen]

1. And the number one most important thing learned at the Bush library:

This photo exists.

That photo reminds a.nolen of Roald Dahl's relationship to the FDR family! I'm also reminded of John Rizzo's book on liberal Hollywood and the CIA.

If I'm right in my conclusions, then Benny was fired when he attacked the Bush family's struggling internet media investment, The Media Group of America.

BuzzFeed itself is fronted by a really creepy character called Jonah Peretti, who helped found *The Huffington Post.* HuffPo now works closely with The Intercept investor Pierre Omidyar. I'll remind you of these ties by quoting one of my previous posts, Apple Pie and Snuff Vids:

> *An awful lot of sickos have been talking to BuzzFeed about snuff fantasies. What is it about this news outlet?*
>
> *Well, it was founded by Jonah Peretti, the same guy who founded* The Huffington Post– *you know, that disappointing online newspaper which teamed up with Pierre Omidyar BEFORE he found Glenn Greenwald and Laura Poitras. See where I'm going?*
>
> *The same people who are promoting Jacob Appelbaum and Tor, are promoting the clean-up agents Greenwald and Poitras, and are providing a platform signaling NSA wackos to go for it: "Your buddies'll love you for ever and do you recognize this supermarket?"*

a.nolen sees the formation of a media constellation: HuffPo, The Intercept, BuzzFeed.* Readers will remember that the Bush Family is no stranger to the intelligence community: George H. W. Bush was the CIA

head who took over after William Colby and covered for Colby's traitorous actions.

Bush Family intel connections just may explain how Jeb Bush could get BuzzFeed to defend his investment in IJReview so quickly…

It shouldn't be forgotten that whoever @crushingbort and @blippoblappo really are, they knew to contact J.K. Trotter at Gawker, another spooky-smelling outfit. They knew that J.K. Trotter would do *exactly* what they wanted him to do.

I'm excited to see where Benny Johnson turns up next!

—

* BusinessInsider, the NYC news spigot founded by "a disgraced Wall Street analyst", may also be part of this constellation. BuzzFeed and BusinessInsider published the 'Snowden Supermarket' pictures which, in an under-handed way, encouraged outraged intelligence personnel to take violent action against Snowden.

Knowing what I know now, I believe that when BuzzFeed and BusinessInsider published the supermarket pictures, and when BuzzFeed pushed Benny's snuff piece, they were bolstering Snowden's image as a martyr *to people who wanted to believe that* while simultaneously showing support for anyone who feels threatened by what Snowden did and making the argument for taking spying in-house. I believe a lot of thought went into Benny Johnson's Snowden-snuff piece: America's Spies Want Edward Snowden Dead. Edward Snowden himself drew attention to this piece in his ARD interview in January, so we know it's one for which US intel wanted *really* wide viewership.

Why? Benny's article screams 'Snowden isn't US intel!' even though we now know Snowden is. Johnson's piece pumps the idea that *what leaks have leaked* did damage to US intelligence, though Johnson gives no examples of damage. The article stress that Snowden was a contractor. Benny was presenting the intel-lifer argument.

And now Benny's gone from BuzzFeed. Don't tick off the Bushes!

5 COMMENTS

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An old friend once told me that when 'public spectacles' happen, like the non-existent 'Weapons of Mass Destruction' or the Edward Snowden Saga, the plan behind them always has more than one goal. That's not to say that every newsworthy event is planned, but there will always be a plan to spin the public's interpretation of that event– to do otherwise would be a wasted opportunity.

My old friend would probably have said, "a.nolen, you thought too much about what the Snowden revelations mean to people like you, and not enough about what the revelations mean to the people who use these abusive programs every day."

I do not know every purpose behind what Snowden did, but I feel strongly that one such purpose was to reign in *intelligence outsourcing.* Intelligence outsourcing is a threat to full-time, 'lifer' spooks because it takes away their power base. Intel outsourcing has existed for a long time, but it started to get scary for intel 'lifers' in the 1990s and turned into a feeding frenzy after 9/11.

As much as I wanted Snowden to be a hero, *he ain't*. Now that I've dropped those blinders, what should have been clear all along has slowly come into focus: immediately after Snowden's revelations, establishment pundits began to call for an end to intelligence outsourcing. "Put the Spies Back Under One Roof!" shouted Tim Shorrock of the *NYT* on June 13th. *The Washington Post* was there one week earlier: "The outsourcing of U.S. intelligence raises risks among the benefits" said Robert O'Harrow Jr.

Neither the *NYT* or *WaPo* had to work hard to come to these conclusions, because dear old Dianne Feinstein spelled it out for everybody:

> *"I'm very concerned that we have government contractors doing what are essentially governmental jobs and, I think, particularly with highly classified information," Feinstein said. "Government people, who take an oath to keep that information secure, should be the ones" handling sensitive intelligence.*

In fact, if you Google 'intelligence outsourcing', you'll get a ton of links to mid-2013 news stories about Snowden's leaks, followed by a rash of 'outsourcing analysis' from 2007, when outside contracting last drew fire and prompted the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence to request a study on the phenomenon.

Back in 2007, this is what the AFCEA, a US military think-tank/lobby, had to say about outsourcing:

> *Since the mid-1990s, intelligence outsourcing has increased 38 percent to reach $42 billion in 2005, with an estimate of 60,000 to 70,000 contracting personnel. According to multiple press accounts, more than $34 billion, or 70 percent of the intelligence community's budget for fiscal year 2007,*

> *was spent on private contractors for tasks ranging from intelligence collection to dissemination. Media reports suggest that 60 percent of the Central Intelligence Agency is supported by contractors, and 70 percent of its counterintelligence field activities are as well.*
>
> *Congress estimated that the government spent on average $126,500 annually to support a full-time intelligence civilian. At least $250,000 is necessary to support a core contractor with overhead fees. Many supporters of outsourcing argued that even though a core contractor costs substantially more than a full-time civilian, the total expenditure to pay for the civilian benefits and retirements far exceeds the short-term cost.*

I doubt things have got any better under Obama. So you see, if your power-base *really is* the CIA (for example) and you're not just at the Agency to further business interests somewhere else, then outsourcing is a *big* problem for you: you're loosing control of the information flow and *being bled dry in the process*. The US intelligence community isn't used to being on the receiving end of that type of deal!

How did the Intelligence Community find themselves in this position? The fall of the USSR didn't help, but more than that, they fell victim to their own predation. *It's in their culture to exploit.* If you hire people whose big talent is to manipulate events towards their own ends, guess what type of management you'll end up with…

James the Gnome

Managers like James Clapper, the current Director of National Intelligence, who took office in August 2010. Clapper is a man with many fingers in many pies. He's worked as an intelligence contractor himself, according to the *LA Times*:

> *Four months after James R. Clapper left his federal job as head of the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency in June 2006, he joined the boards of three government contractors, two of which had been doing business with his agency while he was there.*
> *It was not the only revolving door entered by Clapper, who is now President Obama's nominee to be director of national intelligence.*
>
> *In October 2006 he was hired full-time by DFI International, which was trying to boost its consulting with intelligence agencies. In April 2007, when he returned to public service as the chief of the Pentagon's intelligence programs, DFI paid him a $50,000 bonus on his way out the door, according to his financial disclosure statement. Five months later, DFI landed a contract to advise Clapper's Pentagon office, though company officials do not recall collecting any revenue from the deal.*

And…

> *Clapper's first private-sector stint came after he retired from the Air Force in 1995 as a lieutenant general. He worked for Booz Allen and SRA International, both major intelligence contractors. After the Sept. 11 attacks, he was tapped to lead the geospatial agency, which purchases satellite imagery from private firms and analyzes it for military and intelligence agencies.*
>
> *Clapper left in June 2006 and joined two corporate boards — 3001, a mapping and surveying company whose main clients included the geospatial agency; and GeoEye, whose predecessor firm in 2004 had won a $500-million contract from the agency while Clapper was chief. Clapper also joined the advisory board of Sierra Nevada, an Air Force contractor.*

Booz Allen Hamilton– ya'know like Snowden– is part of the Carlyle Group, George Bush Senior's old haunt and current employer of one of Bill Colby's boys, Johnathan E. Colby. Check out Jonny's corporate bio. Ken Delanian goes on:

> *Now, however, Clapper is poised to become intelligence chief at a time when Congress is asking questions about the explosive growth of private contracting in the $75-billion U.S. intelligence operation. With lawmakers calling on the Obama administration to reduce the outsourcing, a logical question is whether a veteran of the close alliance between government and contractors — Clapper strongly defended the practice in response to a lawmaker's question about a Washington Post series last week — is best suited to bring that system to heel.*

Was Clapper's head in the game?

> *"I worked as a contractor for six years myself, so I think I have a good understanding of the contribution that they have made and will continue to make," he said. "I think the issue is, what's the magnitude? And most importantly … how do we ensure that we're getting our money's worth?"*

While that attitude must have made his patrons happy, I guess it's not what his new team wanted to hear, 'cause now Clapper's got to deal with

the Snowden mess…

But Clapper is more than just a 'squirrel trying to get a nut' in the outsourcing phenomenon; he helped lay the foundation. Way back in the 1990s, in what appears to be the Autumn/Winter 1993/94 *American Intelligence Journal,* Clapper showed himself to be an advocate of 'rationalization', which is the first step to outsourcing*. His article, titled *Reorganization of DIA and Defense Intelligence Activities by Lieutenant General James R. Clapper, USAF, Director Defense Intelligence Agency*, starts this way:

> *"Gentleman, we have no more money. Now we must think."– Ernest Rutherford, British Physicist and Noble Prize Winner, 1871-1937*
>
> *Rutherford used those words in the early 1890s while addressing a poorly-funded British Government committee assigned the task of determining the feasibility of splitting the atom. Little did Baron Rutherford of Nelson know at the time, but his insightful declaration would, in many ways, define the principal challenge the US defense intelligence community faces today, almost a century later.*

Clapper, I'm sure it would warm the cockles of Lord Rutherford's heart to know he gave voice to your concerns!

Clapper goes on to describe how he (and his staff) trimmed the fat in various intelligence activities:

> *As part of the DIA reorganization we sought to drive authority down the management chain to the lowest level, and shifted the agency's previous analytic orientation from a regional to a functional basis.*
>
> *The restructuring also cut supervisors by 169, or by approximately 30%, and reduced burdensome layering across the agency…*

The article details more layoffs, restructurings, stream-linings, etc. which freed up military talent so that men like Clapper could rent it back to the government at twice the price later… a practice which Lord Rutherford's generation first instituted back in Britannia. (Clapper *does not* draw out his historical reference to make *that* connection! A little knowledge is a dangerous thing, James.)

So you see, from an intelligence-lifer's point of view, making Clapper DNI was putting a fox in charge of the hen-house. DNI is an Obama-appointed position, which tells us that the power behind the president has more to do with 'Money That Likes the Use Intelligence', rather than grisly 'intelligence-lifers', who are powerful only as information gatekeepers. This is the lifers' 'meme', courtesy of Jonah Gale's 2011 'Masters in Security' thesis at Georgetown Uni:

> *This thesis finds that intelligence outsourcing—while a useful tool—may be financially and structurally deleterious and undermines American constitutional governance when contractors are allowed to perform inherently governmental activities.*

Mr. Gale has a bright career ahead of him. What that means to you and me is that the right people were being conditioned with this message as far back as 2011, while the actual 'take down' operation came two years later. *Make sure everybody knows what to do when 'it' happens!*

What does surprise me about the Snowden operation is that it appears intelligence gate-keepers' interests are going to trump the money interests. Michael Woods, VP of Verizon Communications, made a statement on June 5th this year addressing the "inappropriateness" of outsourcing intelligence. Whatever Verizon's real reasons for this request for distance, the message is clear: time to take eavesdropping in-house. Woods' statement is one that the Senate Intelligence Committee decided to make prominent on their website.

However, intelligence-lifers' victory isn't complete: note that the Intelligence Authorization Act for FY 2014 pretty much puts a band-aid on the outsourcing problem. After all, Senate Intelligence Committee Chair Dianne Feinstein's own millions come from military contracts— she's gonna put *numero uno* first, even if she has to give lip-service to the other team. (Feinstein's vice-chair, Saxby Chambliss, was part of the post 9/11 intelligence inquiry which was supposed to pinpoint where spooks failed. *Whatever Chambliss actually found*, we ended up with an outsourcing bonanza. So guess which team he's on.)

My guess is that Snowden himself knows what he's doing, because in his NBC interview he made hints about 'more regulation' making PRISM-like programs safer; a view which is very naive. Snowden's not naive.

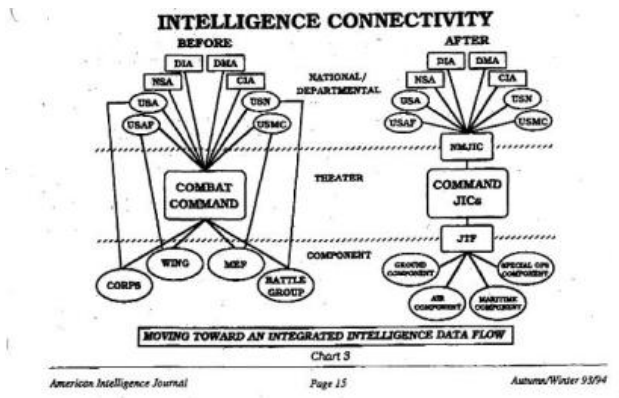
The ugly truth here is that the 'lifer' intelligence community's answer to their outsourcing problem was to disgorge state secrets. I'm happy that these secrets came out; in an attempt to save their own butts these spooks actually did something good for the country. However, their intentions do matter: the lifers did a noble thing for small-minded, selfish reasons. They betrayed *what they say is in the US's best interests* to protect their own power-base. That's a Bill Colby-worthy move; *somebody's* been taking notes these past 40 years.

If you needed more proof that these folks can't be trusted with mass surveillance tools, you've got it right here. The intelligence community exists to further the interests of the intelligence community. We can do better.

—

* Clapper championed two 'pinch points' in the flow of intelligence also, 1) the National Military Joint Intelligence Center (NMJIC) which controls what 'Combat Command' hears from eight other intel gathering outfits, including the NSA and CIA and 2) the Joint Worldwide Intelligence Communications System (JWICS) which tells every different military operation what they need to know when they need to know it… what

Clapper ominously calls a “classified CNN”. *Is that what you really wanted to say James?*



Clapper’s Intel Pinch Points, courtesy of this 1993 paper.

Yikes. Tell me those two creations aren’t ripe for exploitation.

2 COMMENTS

SECURITY THEATER 3000

Greg Hoglund and his wife, Penny Leavy-Hoglund, say business at their HBGary security company has rebounded after the initial negative fallout from the widely publicized hacking episode in February. “In a weird sort of way, it has helped our business,” Leavy-Hoglund said.
Thank you, modbee.com

What follows is the incredible story of how, I believe, naive and unreliable Anonymous members were culled by the FBI and partner security firms through the creation and destruction of ‘LulzSec’. LulzSec was an Anonymous splinter group whose leader ‘Sabu’, real name Hector Xavier Monsegur, shopped his co-conspirators to the FBI *allegedly* after his arrest on June 7th 2011. I think Sabu’s FBI collaboration actually began a few weeks earlier.

This is important because, if I’m right, the ‘Sabu’ events suggest that elements in the FBI collaborated with influential private security companies to engineer the ‘LulzSec’ security threat and remake Anonymous in their own image.

Why would elements in the FBI and private securities firms want to control Anonymous? Anonymous is a loosely-organized hacker collective which has unclear goals. The only thing they reliably do is drum up business for security firms and provide political fodder for lawmakers itching to ‘crack down’ on the internet. If you make money from outsourcing security, Anonymous is good for you.

Our story begins when a handful of Anonymous members hacked HP Gary on Feb 7th 2011. The Anonymous hackers stole emails *in retaliation for* the actions of HP Gary partner and ex-Naval cryptographer Aaron Barr, who had contacted the *Financial Times* on Feb 5th claiming to know the real names of Anonymous members. The article was phrased as a shout-out to the FBI. Barr said he had uncovered the names using social media like Facebook and LinkedIn. Barr also said that he had infiltrated Anonymous by pretending to be somebody else.

Anonymous members were outraged and released Aaron Barr’s ‘liberated’ emails publicly, to the great embarrassment of security firm HP Gary. Barr’s emails included his poorly-conceived research which (Anon members said) accused hundreds of innocent people of being part of Anonymous, a group which has committed criminal acts. This was the same research which Barr had summarized for the *Financial Times*.

Even worse for HP Gary was that Anonymous also exposed gross security incompetence at the company, which was professionally devastating. HP Gary’s own security was so bad that *Ars Technica* featured a write-up of their “basic” mistakes. HP Gary’s ruling family, Greg Hogland and his wife Penny Leavy, were desperate to stop the rest of HP Gary’s email being released.

Penny Leavy was so desperate that she decided to contact Anonymous spokesman Barrett Brown and beg for the leakage to stop: she spoke with him on the phone first, then the conversation moved to an IRC online chat. (!?) Anonymous member ‘url’ copied the entire 5000 line chat for public viewing here. It’s a real-time recording of, reputedly, Anonymous trying to blackmail HP Gary into doing the ethical thing by the hundreds of people Barr falsely accused.

Penny Leavy, Greg Hoglund and Aaron Barr resisted doing the ethical thing at every turn, because admitting wrongdoing would poison their business relationship with the FBI. Aaron was scheduled to meet

with the FBI the next morning (Feb 8th) *probably* to pitch HP Gary services based on the Anonymous data which he knew was grossly flawed.

Back to that long IRC blackmail chat… I've edited the 5000 chat lines down to the core conversation here. It's about 1/3 of the original's length. Greg Hogland, Penny Leavy, Aaron Barr take part, as well as a small band of Anonymous members including 'Sabu' and 'Barrett Brown'. Most important of all, an unknown journalist called 'Laurelai' was also part of the blackmail chat.

'Laurelai' was part of the IRC chat from the very start, even though none of the Anonymous people seemed to know who 'Laurelai' was. 'Laurelai' claimed to work for the Anonymous/Wikileaks hybrid journalism project, Crowdleaks, though he/she was unfamiliar with how the Anonymous media machine works. *Despite her ignorance of the situation*, 'Laurelai' somehow knew to be at that particular IRC chat for HB Gary information. Was Laurelai's presence a newbies' astounding good luck, or something more sinister? Consider what happened next…

Four days after the blackmail chat, on Feb 11th, 'Laurelai' leaked information which identified 'Sabu' to Backtrace Security, according to the firm. Backtrace is "a small security consulting firm with operations in Michigan and Florida that specializes in social engineering", says Threatpost.com. Backtrace identified Sabu as Hector Xavier Monsegur themselves, then alerted the FBI to Sabu's real name in mid-March 2011 when they made their findings public.

By April 2011, the FBI had worked out who Sabu was through their own independent methods. ('Cause government employees can do it without private outsourcing! ;P)

I don't believe that the FBI waited another two months to put pressure on Sabu. I believe that they wanted to look good with a fast win against Anonymous. I believe that FBI pressure on Sabu started sometime in April 2011.

But Sabu wasn't arrested until June 7th! I don't believe there's anything magical about being arrested that suddenly makes it possible for the FBI to put pressure on somebody. The FBI is not known for gentlemanly– or even legal– tactics, and I refer you to CIA whistle-blower John Kiriakou's open letter to Edward Snowden for proof. If you need more convincing, consider that even FBI fan-boy J. M. Berger admits the Bureau regularly breaks its own rules when targeting groups it doesn't like.

I think that Sabu's first mission for the FBI was to create LulzSec, an organization that was supposed to exist for 50 days, just long enough for everybody involved to do something illegal on record.

LulzSec's 'seal of office'.

If I'm correct about Sabu, the FBI and LulzSec, then 'Laurelai' is the key player who made the FBI's plan possible, *and knew when and where Penny Leavy was going to negotiate with her blackmailers*. Penny didn't start out on an IRC chat, she was on the phone with Barrett Brown when she then decided to continue the talk on IRC, enabling more Anonymous members to go 'on record'. Penny said she had never used IRC before that chat. (IRC is a well-know way for Anonymous to communicate.) This IRC chat was NOT a spontaneous event; somebody told 'Laurelai' to be there and try to get info on Anonymous by posing as a journalist. *'Cause everybody knows Anonymous are media whores! Just ask Palantir Technologies.*

Laurelai would deliver the goods on Sabu in four days.

Who is Laurelai?

Threatpost.com describes 'Laurelai as " ~~Wesley~~ Laurelai Bailey, a Davenport, Iowa based Anonymous member". This is because 'Laurelai' appears to be a male-to-female transexual and transgendered rights activist, according to what I could find on the *very partial* *Encyclopedia Dramatica* and *The Trans Advocate*. 'Laurelai' has angered somebody, because *ED* accuses 'Laurelai' of violence against women and other very serious things that make 'Laurelai' seem unstable, like a person who it would be easy for the FBI to lean on. (BTW, Laurelai claims to be the one who 'proved' Stuxnet was NSA too…)

According to my old buddy Adrian Chen, Laurelai (again, seems to be the same one) cooperated completely with the FBI during their 'investigation' into Lulzsec:

> *Bailey says Lulz Security [LulzSec] hackers hold a grudge against her for leaking logs from the secret chat room in which they planned the HBGary hack—which she says she did in retaliation for them harassing some of her friends. (We later published an article based on the logs.) When the interview was over, the agents carted off a couple of her hard drives, her camera and other computer equipment.*

Who are these friends of Laurelai? Jennifer Emick of Backtrace Security! The firm that first outed Sabu to the FBI!

> *Soon, [Jennifer] Emick found herself and some online acquaintances engaged in a pitched online turf war with members of Anonymous, with each side accusing the other of offenses including "trolling" (or online harassment) and "doxing" (or publicly outing) each other.*
>
> *"You had these warring groups and, in the end, you find out that a lot of what happened was manufactured by other people, and you don't know the truth behind it," said Gregg Housh, a self-described Internet activist and early member of Anonymous who Emick believed was behind many of the online attacks against her.*
>
> *But Emick's early involvement with the group had given her contacts that would later prove useful. Among them, Wesley Lauelai Bailey, a Davenport, Iowa based Anonymous member who uses the handle "Laurelai." It was Bailey who would ultimately provide Emick with the information that would lead to Sabu's arrest.*

BackTrace Security founder Jennifer Emick used to be an Anonymous member back when Anonymous was attacking the Church of Scientology. Emick and Anonymous have a history of feuding and Backtrace has gone after Wikileaks in the past:

> *Brown [Barrett Brown, Anonymous spokesman] claims that BackTrace was a group that was affiliated with th3j3st3r, an online activist best known for launching a denial of service attack on Wikileaks for its publication of leaked U.S. diplomatic cables. Brown said the individuals behind BackTrace are also behind the Anonymousdown Web site and Twitter accounts like @faketopiary and @fakegregghoush that have been publishing links that claim to out, or "dox," Anonymous members in recent days. Brown said the group was also compiling information on him and his former acquaintances, including an "ex-girlfriend's 16-year-old daughter" as part of their research on Anonymous.*

So not only does Jennifer Emick work alongside the FBI, she actively antagonizes Anonymous. *Security theater!*

The information Sabu gave to the FBI helped them arrest people associated with Lulzsec, a splinter group, not Anonymous proper. LulzSec was set up by Sabu in May 2011, well after the FBI knew who he was. This matters, because if LulzSec actions had been conducted under Anonymous proper, Anonymous might now be as dead as LulzSec.

It's as though the FBI was protecting Anonymous by telling Sabu to draw away an undesirable element, which was later neutralized. (We now know that there were probably two other FBI informers involved in LulzSec too.) Since LulzSec's destruction, Anonymous has gone on to drum-up business for security companies and provide political fodder for internet-freedom quashing lawmakers, but in a safer-feeling way, according to the FBI in August 2013.

Creation of LulzSec: The FBI got a win against famous hackers; HP Gary and friends got a more manageable way to scare up business.

Interestingly, ex-intelligence pro Quinn Norton was Anonymous' WIRED contact for two years which, judging by WIRED's archives of her work, spanned October 2011 through July 2012. This is what her website says:

> *I was Wired's correspondent on Anonymous and the Occupy movement in 2011 & 2012. While I wrote dozens of articles, witnessed six evictions and several major hacks/Anonymous protest actions, two pieces hold a special place in my coverage:*
> *My Inside Anonymous for July/2012 Wired Magazine*
> *"A Eulogy for Occupy," Wired.com December/2012*

Being involved with Anonymous in the 2011/2012 period *specifically* means something to the intelligence community. Consider that Sabu, a "Puerto Rican guy in the projects", was 'hacking' for the Arab Spring in Tunisia circa December 2010… *how 'Global Village'!*

But how much of a win was Lulzsec for the FBI? It was only a complete win for **FBI brass who benefit from working with the private sector…**

A Little Background

The creation of LulzSec came at the perfect time for companies like HP Gary, Palantir Technologies, Berico Technologies and their lawyer buddies Hunton & William. There was discontent in Congress about how private security firms were being used to gather dirt on critics of powerful institutions, like the US Chamber of Congress. Aaron Barr's unethical behavior spurred a dozen congressmen to call for an inquiry a few weeks after the Anonymous email leaks on March 1st:

> *The plan, which called for drawing up detailed social networks of progressive critics and sought to launch malware hacks against progressive organizations, was ostensibly created by data security firm HBGary Federal.*
>
> *It was revealed when protest group "Anonymous" compromised the company's network and dumped tens of thousands of their emails onto the public Internet.*
>
> *Amid the emails, details began to emerge about a shadowy world of defense contractors, where social media could be used to manipulate public opinion and bloggers are handled as mortal enemies.*
>
> *HBGary Federal was just one group allegedly at work on projects related to these efforts. Together with Berico*

> *Technologies and Palantir Technologies, the entire group was called "**Team Themis**." They were compiling the plans as something of a sales pitch for the Chamber's law firm, Hunton & William.*

'Team Themis' is what Hunton & William pitched to Bank of America, with special emphasis on pressuring Glenn Greenwald to drop his Wikileaks support. Attempting to pressure Glenn is what actually brought HP Gary down, I wrote about that in my post Deconfliction.

In a nutshell, 'Team Themis' were desperate to show that they're the good guys, and LulzSec suddenly appeared to fill the void with a 50-day "reign of terror" (Thanks, Adrian!); an evil reign, during which hackers were "Laughing at your security since 2011!" and attacking the CIA, the US Senate and even an FBI affiliate… Note how the NSA and it's legion of contractors are suspiciously absent.

Team Themis would probably have got away with it too, if it weren't for that pesky kid from ~~the CIA~~ *Salon* magazine. Which brings me to another point…

There's one more worrisome issue that needs airing: in this post-Snowden world, we now know that the NSA/CIA/FBI work directly with companies like Facebook to map social networks, so its unlikely that Aaron Barr was going to give the Feds anything they didn't have already. Was the whole HP Gary fiasco a fake conflict for fake stakes?

Was LulzSec's 'reign of terror' just *security theater,* designed to justify outsourcing intelligence work to private companies, companies which are unpopular in Washington because they undermine *some* real spooks' job security? How often over the past year have you heard full-time government spooks bitch about the problems with *outsourcing*? Hmm.

Was it full-salary spooks' fear of being displaced by contractors that made Snowden's leaks happen, I wonder? (That one's for you, E. Oop.)

Maybe *this generation's* epic intelligence in-fight is between those who profit from government outsourcing and those who profit from keeping intelligence in-house… because if it's all about money, that explains how Gawker.com can hate 1) Snowden AND 2) conservative intelligence pros AND 3) people who out David Horowitz's CIA work.

Let's Not Forget Penny and Greg

ON THE SUBJECT OF MONEY…

To understand why the USA is the way it is, you need to know something about a nasty subset of the population who make money as government contractors. Don't get me wrong, there can be decent people who work for the Feds, but it's a line of business that also attracts some really ugly characters.

Many of the ugly ones are two-bit millionaires who exploit connections with the military, or some other vast bureaucracy, to enrich themselves. These are the *littler* guys who make money off war, social crises and fear; they are modern-day carpetbaggers.

Penny Leavy and Greg Hoglund are two such carpetbaggers. Incompetent but well-connected, they've scraped together a small fortune from prostituted security clearances and those in Washington who are willing to outsource government functions.

From my experience, what unites these carpetbaggers is their lack of ethics or concern for how their actions affect fellow citizens. They're mindlessly loyal to whichever bureaucracy happens to be paying them at the moment, consequences be damned. If pressed, they're good at logical contortions in support of their greed: somehow they're never the bad guys in their own mind. Don't believe me? Read Penny's IRC chat.

That IRC chat shows how Penny Leavy *et alia* try to wriggle out of an embarrassing situation.

The IRC chat also explains why Palantir Technologies' sales pitch to Bank of America focused on Glenn Greenwald and other media pros. The IRC blackmail chat shows that Anonymous's only plan was to drum-up media exposure; they can't agree on what they actually want from HP Gary.

Anonymous participants relied on these journalists (amongst others): Glenn Greenwald, Andy Greenberg (Forbes' contact with Julian Assange), Parmy Olson (Forbes' contact with Anonymous). Anonymous also counted heavily on CNN for media exposure– they had five different contacts there! Given that Anonymous member '+cOs' claims to have given over 50 interviews to news outlets like *The Guardian*, NYT, AOLNews, CBS, and that Anonymous member 'Baas' rolls with 'Swedish media', it's easy to understand why CIA-private-partnership Palantir Technologies would create a set of slides on Glenn Greenwald like the ones I wrote about in my previous post.

Back in 2011, Anonymous pundits had an awful lot of media-establishment friends who were willing to give the 'hackers' what they wanted: an audience. HP Gary understood those media connections and thought they could ride people like Glenn Greenwald to lifetime employment. Peeing on Glenn's shoes is what ultimately brought HP Gary down a few months later and *interrupted* the gravy-train for Penny and Greg– but they're already back in the saddle! (Check out that link. If you put your cursor over the Hoglunds' headshots the pictures *swizzle*. That's carpetbagger for 'classy'!)

Washington D.C. may be evil, but it's also entertaining…

—

PS. To my buddy, Hubri5: Paul Roberts isn't talking about you in this ThreatPost.com article, is he?

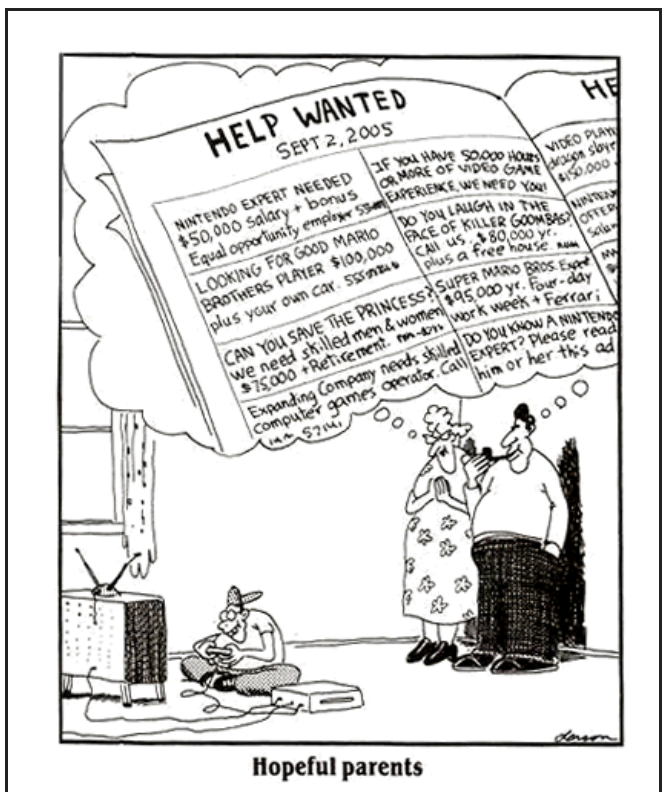
> *In an interview with Forbes.com, a spokesman for BackTrace, who used the name Hubris, said the group "aims to put an end to Anonymous 'in its current form.'" According to the article, BackTrace's members have become disenchanted with Anonymous's more strident, political activism – a change from the group's roots as an anarchic prank-oriented collective whose biggest target had been the Florida based Church of Scientology. "Anonymous has never been about revolutions. It's not about the betterment of mankind. It's the Internet hate machine, or that's what it's supposed to be," Hubris is quoted as saying.*

How did you get to be wound up with Backtrace Security and this mess?! 'Cause, I gotta say, Backtrace smells *really bad…*

2 COMMENTS

DECONFLICTION

The first time I heard the phrase 'deconfliction team' was when it came out that the NSA was using online gaming forums, like those of the World of Warcraft (WoW), to identify people who hold anti-government views.


HELP WANTED
SEPT 2, 2005
NINTENDO EXPERT NEEDED $50,000 Salary + bonus
LOOKING FOR GOOD MARIO BROTHERS PLAYER $100,000 plus your own car.
CAN YOU SAVE THE PRINCESS? We need skilled men & women $75,000 + Retirement.
Expanding Company needs skilled computer games operator. Call
IF YOU HAVE 50,000 HOURS OR MORE OF VIDEO GAME EXPERIENCE, WE NEED YOU!
DO YOU LAUGH IN THE FACE OF KILLER GOOMBAS? CALL US, $80,000 yr. plus a free house.
SUPER MARIO BROS. Expert $95,000 yr. Four-day work week + Ferrari
DO YOU KNOW A NINTENDO EXPERT? Please read him or her this ad
Hopeful parents

Somewhere in Maryland, circa 1989…

Apparently, the NSA has so many gamers trolling WoW, that they need an oversight team to make sure that none of the different operations interfere with each other. That oversight group is called a 'deconfliction team'.

My post today is about what happens when deconfliction teams fail. In 2011, one such disaster occurred when Palantir Technologies collided with Glenn Greenwald.

Palantir Technologies was founded by Peter Thiel, the millionaire Facebook investor and ex-PayPal CEO whose homosexuality was forcibly outed by Nick Denton's Gawker.com. Palantir got its start-up money from Thiel's firm, Founders Fund, as well as the CIA's private technology investment firm In-Q-Tel. Unsurprisingly, Palantir's main business is data collection and analysis for the US Intelligence Community.

What that means, readers, is that Palantir does the heavy data lifting for US Intelligence clients. Palantir knows the spying methods, but not necessarily the overarching spying strategy or anything else about intelligence operations that Palantir was not hired to help with. Palantir 'needs to know' very little.

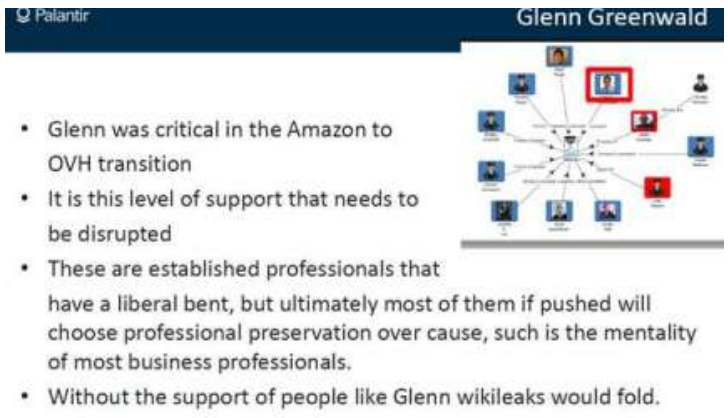
So… way back in 2011, Palantir was *at best* on the peripheral edge of a deconfliction team's radar. Couple that with Palantir's red-blooded hunger for profit anywhere, anyhow, and you have the perfect deconfliction storm.

Everything went pear-shaped the day Wikileaks claimed to have stolen data from one of Bank of America's executives. The data was said to contain embarrassing and incriminating information on BoA. (Subsequent developments cast a lot of doubt over the meaning of this data ; it also seems that part of this data was deleted the following August by ex-Wikileaker Daniel Domsheit-Berg, whose theatrical behavior aggravated tensions amongst Wikileaks members.)

BoA responded by trying to get a jump on the Wikileaks hackers: they hired a flashy lawyer (Hunton and Williams), who in turn tried to peddle the services of Palantir Technologies/ HB Gary/Berico Technologies. According to *The Tech Herald*:

> *Palantir would take care of network and insider threat investigations. For their part, Berico Technologies and HBGary Federal would analyze WikiLeaks.*

This is where the fireworks really start, because Palantir put together a presentation on how they would "take care of" the insider threat, which involved targeting Glenn Greenwald in particular. Let me stress that Palantir called out Glenn Greenwald by name as a **fair-weather friend** of Wikileaks. Here's a slide from Palantir's presentation to BoA:


Palantir
Glenn Greenwald
Glenn was critical in the Amazon to OVH transition
It is this level of support that needs to be disrupted
These are established professionals that have a liberal bent, but ultimately most of them if pushed will choose professional preservation over cause, such is the mentality of most business professionals.
Without the support of people like Glenn wikileaks would fold.

The start of a tradition in leaked slide shows?

Depending on who you ask, Palantir's proposal was either released to Crowdleaks.org or hacked free by Anonymous, and the whole ugly mess came out. HP Gary took the fall for Palantir, Berico and the lawyers: HP Gary was split in half, one half folded, the other got bought my Man Tech International.

How did Glenn Greenwald respond to the knowledge that the CIA's data-intelligence Death Star had been trained on his chest? Glenn found it all "hard to take seriously". *You're one cool customer, Glenn!*

And did Palantir Technologies take the usual corporate route: clam up and call a crack team of lawyers? No. Palantir co-founder Alex Karp made a special, personal statement to Glenn apologizing for Palantir's behavior and severing profitable contacts with HP Gary.

Palantir's plot targeted other journalists too, even though Karp didn't feel it necessary to make special apology statements to them: James Ball (*The Guardian*), Jennifer 8. Lee (*The New York Times*), Daniel Mathews (*The Telegraph, Forbes, The Times*). Notice any employment patterns in this list?

What I believe happened with Palantir/Greenwald is the mother of all 'deconfliction' FUBARs. Fortunately for Langley, the mainstream media is so complicit that nobody 'credible' dug too deeply.

Things start to smell even worse when you look into the background of HP Gary, the fall-guy-company. HP Gary was a data analysis firm which focused on serving the US Federal Government (through its offices in Bethesda, MD and Washington D.C.) The firm was started by Greg Hoglund, a regular Black Hat presenter, whose hobby was exploring the World of Warcraft online network. In 2005, he wrote about Blizzard's WoW spy program, 'The Warden', which monitored data on gamers' PCs: everything from emails sent to programs executed. What Blizzard was doing is similar to what the NSA can do through 'backdoors' in software. Back in 2005, the Electronic Freedom Foundation thought Hoglund was pretty cool.

One week before the 'Targeting of Greenwald' broke (and one day after Arron Barr, an HP Gary colleague who published data on Anonymous members in the *FT*), HP Gary was attacked by Anonymous so ferociously that Hoglund's wife Penny had to call Anonymous and beg them stop. *Hi. This is Mrs. Hoglund. Yes. I guess there's been some trouble at school…* I laugh, but Mrs. Hoglund's outreach worked.

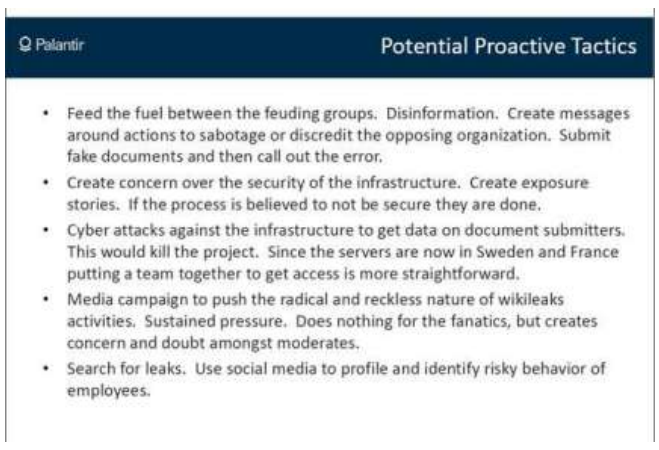
So, readers, Greg Hoglund was an expert on the World of Warcraft networks who was willing to work with CIA buddies. We learned later, of course, that the NSA was using WoW networks to watch possible future 'terrorists'. Perhaps professional game trolling was Hoglund's gig after HP Gary folded?

What about Glenn? Like any good media operative, he set about using this opportunity to his advantage, honing the same righteous indignation and factual casualness that would make him famous two years later after the Snowden Leaks:

> *Given my involvement in this story, I'm going to defer to others in terms of the reporting. But — given the players involved and the facts that continue to emerge — this story is far too significant to allow to die due to lack of attention. Many of the named targets are actively considering commencing civil proceedings (which would entail compulsory discovery) as well as ethical grievances with the relevant Bar associations. As the episode with Palantir demonstrates, simply relying on the voluntary statements of the corporations involved ensures that the actual facts will remain concealed if not actively distorted. The DOJ ought to investigate this as well, but for reasons I detailed on Friday, that is unlikely in the extreme. Entities of this type routinely engage in conduct like this with impunity, and the serendipity that led to their exposure in this case should be seized to impose some accountability. That this was discovered through a* ***random*** *email hack — and that these firms felt so free to propose these schemes in writing and, at least from what is known, not a single person raised any objection at all — underscores how common this behavior is.*

This rant came on February 15th 2011, four days after Glenn got his personal apology from Alex Karp– so when Glenn wrote that screed he knew he was safe and smelt blood in the water. Fast forward a few years: Glenn's now working for the guy who owns Thiel's ex-employer, PayPal. Small world.

Given that part of Palantir's strategy was to feed weak-minded journalists false information to discredit them, I'm not surprised that Glenn ignored Snowden's emails for so long before Laura Poitras lead him by the nose back to Cinncinatus@lavabit@CryptoPartyWiki.


Palantir
Potential Proactive Tactics
Feed the fuel between the feuding groups. Disinformation. Create messages around actions to sabotage or discredit the opposing organization. Submit fake documents and then call out the error.
Create concern over the security of the infrastructure. Create exposure stories. If the process is believed to not be secure they are done.
Cyber attacks against the infrastructure to get data on document submitters. This would kill the project. Since the servers are now in Sweden and France putting a team together to get access is more straightforward.
Media campaign to push the radical and reckless nature of wikileaks activities. Sustained pressure. Does nothing for the fanatics, but creates concern and doubt amongst moderates.
Search for leaks. Use social media to profile and identify risky behavior of employees.

Find slides at *The Tech Herald*.

Consider Daniel Domscheit-Berg's antics around the Bank of America information in light of point one on that slide. Bank of America is one of the major US banks, which have a long history of cooperating with US intelligence. I've heard these financial institutions described as "revolving doors" for organizations like the CIA, Citibank being the most notorious.

Veteran Tor watchers will note that Palantir thought Wikileaks' servers' position in Sweden made them more vulnerable… not surprising, seeing as the Swedes are partners to the US Department of Defense's Tor Project.

Wrap Up: Edward Snowden, operator of one of the largest Tor exit nodes, chose Glenn Greenwald, the guy CIA-partner Palantir won't touch, to 'out' his trove of leaks. *A trove of leaks that you'll never read.*

You know, it's weird, but I don't think Ed's cute anymore.

2 COMMENTS

CARNEGIE MELLON: BURYING TOR KNOWLEDGE

THIS JUST IN!

a.nolen reader Hubri5 as altered me to an astounding fact:

Carnegie Mellon, the US university, has forcibly cancelled a session at this year's Black Hat conference, which starts today.

Carnegie Mellon researchers Alexander Volynkin and Michael McCord were scheduled to deliver their talk, titled: "You don't have to be the NSA to break Tor: de-anonymising users on a budget", but university lawyers stepped in. The session was supposed to explain how Tor could be 'de-anonymised' for around $3000. Read Hubri5's analysis of what that $3000 probably refers to here.

The entire *Guardian* article is available online, Researchers: Lawyers Blocked our Black Hat Demo on De-anonymising Tor, *Shelved Black Hat presentation would have explained why you don't have to be the NSA to break Tor*

> *Details on the presentation, which have now been removed from the Black Hat site, suggested that a determined hacker could "de-anonymise hundreds of thousands Tor clients and thousands of hidden services within a couple of months".*

Carnegie Mellon lawyers claim that neither the University, nor its institutional partnership with the Department of Defense, gave permission for the talk.

> *The counsel for Carnegie Mellon said that neither the university nor its Software Engineering Institute (SEI), had given approval for public disclosure of the material set to be detailed by Volynkin and McCord, according to the Black Hat organisers.*

What is SEI? According to their website:

> *The Software Engineering Institute (SEI) is a not-for-profit Federally Funded Research and Development Center (FFRDC) at Carnegie Mellon University, specifically established by the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) to focus on software and cybersecurity.*
>
> *As an FFRDC, the SEI fills voids where in-house and private sector research and development centers are unable to meet DoD core technology needs. For government and industry, the SEI is an objective, unbiased, honest broker that:*
>
> - *maintains a critical mass of top-caliber software and*

cyber professionals
- *provides a central repository for information about software engineering and cybersecurity*
- *develops and maintains core competence in areas critical to the DoD*
- *serves as an* intellectual crossroads *and* catalyst for change

We help government and industry organizations develop software-reliant systems that are more affordable, more agile, more reliable, and more secure. Through the strength of our workforce and our focused research, we provide immediate and long-term integrated solutions.

SEI Technical Divisions

- *CERT Division*
- *Software Solutions Division*
- *Emerging Technology Center*

So tell me again that Tor isn't a DoD spying tool!

Unsurprisingly, Tor Project people are part of the silencing:

Organisers from the Tor Project said they were working with the Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT) at Carnegie Mellon, which is sponsored by the US Department of Homeland Security, to release information on the problems identified by the researchers.

"We did not ask Black Hat or CERT to cancel the talk. We did (and still do) have questions for the presenter and for CERT about some aspects of the research, but we had no idea the talk would be pulled before the announcement was made," said Tor Project president Roger Dingledine.

"We never received slides or any description of what would be presented in the talk itself beyond what was available on the Black Hat webpage. Researchers who have told us about bugs in the past have found us pretty helpful in fixing issues, and generally positive to work with."

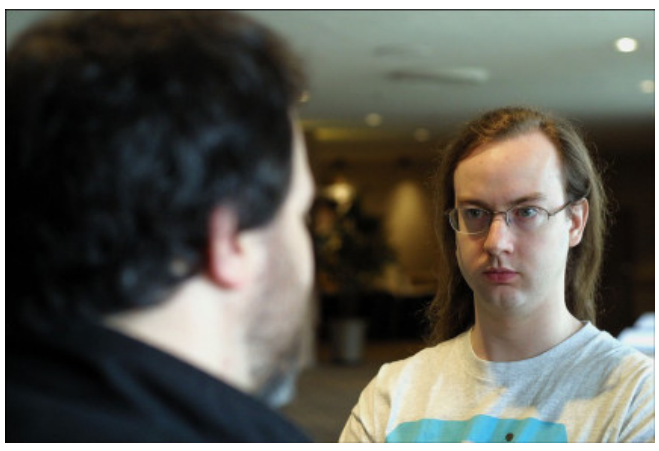
It may also interest potential Tor users that the Tor Foundation non-profit entity has this address, according to their website:

The Tor Project is a 501(c)(3) non-profit based in the United States. The official address of the organization is:

The Tor Project
7 Temple Street, Suite A
Cambridge, MA 02139-2403 USA

That's about five blocks from MIT, a university which receives so much US government/DoD funding that it's something like 5th on the list of likely missile-strike spots should the US ever enter a war with a real adversary, such as Russia.

Speaking of MIT: Roger Dingledine, the Tor Project's current president, was born and bred at The Institute– it's where he got his Bachelor's, Master's and first teaching experience. It's not clear that Dingletdine ever broke his MIT connection, because *right now* somebody with a username 'arma' at an MIT email address maintains Dingledine's *curriculum vitae* at www.freehaven.net.



Roger Dingledine an MIT geek? Hell yes.

But Dingledine's CV has something even more interesting buried under 'Affiliations':

Other previous employers include the MIT network security team, a summer at the National Security Agency, a graphics supercomputer startup called Integrated Computing Engines (ICE), and Emory University.

So, *wow*! Did Carnegie Mellon's stock just fall!?! Meanwhile, every other DoD illegal op is salivating over Tor's 2015 budget…

Thank you, Hubri5!

LEAVE A COMMENT

PAGE SIX

UPDATE: I've thrown a lot of information into this post, so I've included a couple of 'recap' statements in the 'Bye, Bye Adrian' section. I hope this makes things clear. If not, I'm always available for questions through

adotnolen (at) gmx, or via comment. Thanks for reading.

Over the course of the last week, I came across two tenuously related stories: 1) the career of Gawker founder Nick Denton and 2) the sudden unemployment of Gawker journalist Adrian Chen.

I've decided to post what I've found on these topics because I suspect the information will mean more to some of my readers than it currently does to me. Therefore, a.nolen's *Reflections on Page Six*, for your perusal…

Gossip Barons

I find it both grotesque and poetic that Lloyd Shearer, the king of 1970s gossip column *Personality Parade*, should also be a behind-the-scenes power-broker. Not just any power-broker either, but one on such a level that he could comfortably lob threats at his contemporary, William Egan Colby, the head of the CIA.

Perhaps I shouldn't find the gossip/power combo surprising. *Perhaps,* in order to publish gossip you've got to be better connected than the people you talk about. If you weren't better connected, one of your victims would eventually take you down, legally or otherwise, in revenge.

If you view the 'gossip column' as a way for the biggest dog on the block to bite the necks of the smaller dogs, then Lloyd Shearer's creepy letter exchange with Bill Colby makes a lot of sense.

In the spirit of snarling dogs, I'd like to introduce you to Nick Denton, founder, contributor and editor of Gawker.com.

Nick Denton, a modern-day Lloyd Shearer.

Who is Nick Denton?

Nick Denton was born in 1966– he was a baby when Colby, Angleton and the rest of the crew were battling it out for CIA dominance. So how did he find himself in Lloyd Shearer's shoes?

Nick Denton was born in Hampstead, what *New Yorker* magazine calls a "citadel of the moneyed liberal intelligentsia," to a Hungarian immigrant mother and her economics-professor-then-husband. *New Yorker* continues:

> *Nick found himself in a near-bespoke environment of cosmopolitan cool, where his kinds of otherness—Jewish, Hungarian—made him blend in rather than stand out. So it was with the private school he attended, University College School, which placed little value on family crests but sent yearly waves of graduates to Oxford and Cambridge. Which is what happened to Denton.*

At Oxford, Nick became editor of the socialist student publication *Isis*. Socialism/communism has always found a good home in Oxbridge, the UK's elite university duo. In fact, the KGB used Cambridge in particular to recruit some of its more famous British spies. In this milieu, Nick Denton befriended powerful people who Denton's buddy and *Guardian* journalist Somon Kuper describes as "Young Chiefs":

> *"Another characteristic of the new élite is networks. The Young Chiefs, who tend to live near each other in the centre of London, get the big breaks from old friends or people they meet at their friends' brunches or leaving parties. On the political side, the Young Chiefs are so close-knit many of them are related. Ed Balls (Oxford, Harvard and the Financial Times , economic adviser to Gordon Brown) and David Miliband (Oxford and MIT, head of the Downing Street policy unit) studied in Boston together as Kennedy Scholars. Miliband's younger brother, also called Ed, works with Balls.*
>
> *Balls's younger brother, Andrew (Oxford, Harvard and now the FT) is well-placed for entry. Balls's wife, Yvette Cooper (Oxford and Harvard, now a Labour MP), is a Young Chief too, as is her sometime tutorial partner at Oxford, Stephanie Flanders (Oxford, Harvard and the FT, senior adviser to the US Treasury Secretary Larry Summers).*
>
> ***The information technology entrepreneurs** are more diverse. Only about half went to Oxbridge. But any hopes that the Internet revolution could smash the old éelitist networks have been dashed: the CVs of the Net tycoons are remarkably like those of the politicos. Nick Denton (Oxford and the FT, founder of Moreover.com) was a friend of Flanders at the FT and through her met the elder Balls and Miliband. Tim Jackson (Oxford and the FT) is the founder of QXL. At Oxford both read PPE, the politicos' degree, as did Charles Cohen, founder of Beenz.*

What I'd like to stress about Denton is that, despite his protestations to the contrary, **he is of the privileged, post-WWII U.K. establishment**. One of the characteristics of this 'elite', on both sides of the Atlantic, is that they like to project themselves as 'underdogs,' when they are anything but. Denton's protestations of being 'outside' the NYC elite are both flattery to himself (See! I'm the little rich self-made kid!) and a defense mechanism, like pulling the 'race card'. But, on with Nicky's story…

In 1989, at the age of twenty-three, Denton left *Isis* to cover the fall of communism in his mother's native Hungary for *The Financial Times*. This period in Hungary made his career: after the revolution, Denton began to cover the subsequent waves of Western investments, which lead to him write a book with Nick Leeson, the creepy securities trader who brought down Barings Bank. (As a former finance industry professional, I promise you that only an establishment journalist would be let near a book deal like Leeson's.)

Denton used the contacts he made wading through investment bankers, and their political helpers in the former USSR, to become an entrepreneur himself. San Fransisco was on the horizon… and sudden riches.

Denton became a multimillionaire by selling a handful of forgettable start-ups, none of which were enough to catapult him into the upper echelons of Silicon Valley. Denton wanted to be on the inside of *something*, so in 2002 he weighed his options:

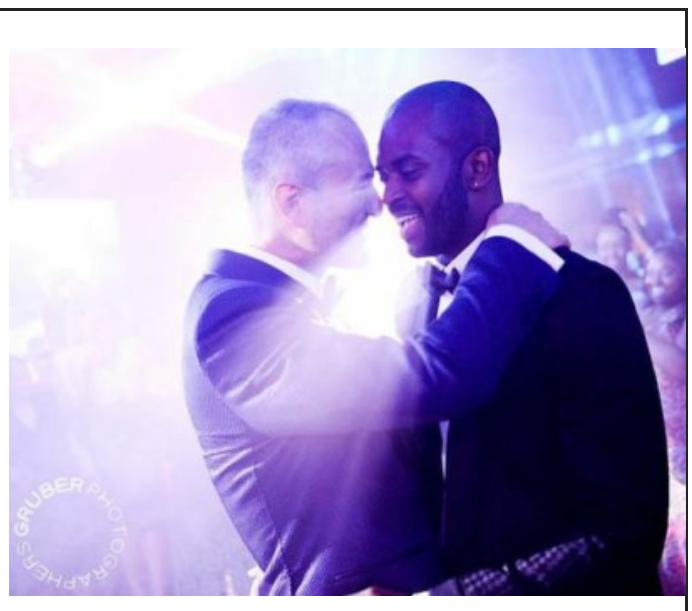
> *He [Denton] needed a new gig, and to get out of San Francisco. He whipped up a spreadsheet and did an analysis of places to live in, assigning weighted scores to such categories as "old friends," "business opportunities," "Hungarians," "Jews," "hotter guys," and "nature." (The last one accounted for little.) Then, rationality be damned, he tweaked the inputs until New York came out on top. He moved here in the summer of 2002.*

When I read that excerpt, I feel like I'm being lied to. Whatever really happened, we can be sure that Denton began Gawker Media in New York.

Gawker Media's flagship company, Gawker.com, is an NYC-focused website that is dedicated to spreading gossip about celebrities and not-so-celebrities. *The Guardian* describes Gawker this way:

> *[Gawker] was initially written by a young woman called Elizabeth Spiers who, in 12 posts a day covering everything from a Tina Brown memo to the latest hiring and firings at the New York Times, perfected a gloriously sharp, nose-against-the-glass outsider take on the big wheels of Manhattan's press and publishing worlds.*

Gawker eventually branched out into sex tapes and is generally considered to be an online, smuttier version of *News of the World*, which is read by many people who don't admit to reading it. Gawker is famous for forcibly outing Peter Thiel, the closet-homosexual Facebook investor and founder of Palantir Technologies— a CIA/In-Q-Tel partner. Hypocritically, reclusive Denton hid his gayness in the past and didn't admit it to his parents until he was in his thirties.



Nick Denton and new husband Derrence Washington on display in NYC's Natural History Museum.

Gawker is generally liberal in tone: they don't like the Tea Party (contributor Allie Jones is obsessed with smearing it), but on the other hand, high-profile contributor Adrian Chen (before he was let go under mysterious circumstances) disparaged Snowden and Wikileaks, while he talked-up Tor— all wise career moves in The Free World. As Adrian Chen said in a 2012 article:

> *We're fascinated by the Tor Network, an online anonymity technology that is often referred to by the much more sexy nickname "the dark net."*

Chen's inconsistency is not because he's stupid; it's because Tor is a *bona fide* US spook asset, while Wikileaks is not entirely under US control and, sadly, Snowden was designed to suck up attention from somewhere else. **Chen always played his cards in service of the house.** That last observation is important, for reasons I'll explore in a minute.

Gakwer Media is not just Gawker.com, it's also Gizmodo, a tech site which played an important role smoothing over intelligence shenanigans around Spamhaus; Fleshbot, a porn site; Deadspin, a sports website; and the angry feminist tabloid Jezebel, amongst other less-well-known websites.

Although each one these websites are US-focused, Gawker Media itself is not an American company– it's not even British:

> *On October 5, 2002, Nick Denton registered the domain Gawker.com. Its administrative contact was a low-tax offshore company in Budapest, called Blogwire Hungary Szellemi Alkotast Hasznosito. The last three words translate as "Intellectual Property Exploitation."*

I would like to point out, readers, that there are much easier tax havens to work in than Hungary. (We've come a long way from *Isis*, Nick.) Offshore-Fox says it well:

> *Regrettably, bureaucracy and the rubber stamp still rule in Hungary, although things are increasingly getting better. The actual details are not worth going into here, but the formation of a KFT quickly requires an experienced guide.*

But don't worry about the corruption. For men like Denton, who have contacts amongst globalist bankers and their cronies in ex-Soviet block countries, anything is possible. (To Quentin Tarantino's dismay, Gawker's holding company is registered in the Caymans.)

Have Denton's riches and prestige changed his politics? In a February interview with *Playboy*, Denton supports permanent revolution, nationalized monopolies *and* union-busting. Is that program something an elitist Oxford socialist could get behind? You bet! *Denton: How can the government correct income inequality by taxing monopolies if those companies hide themselves overseas?*

I think I've given a reasonably comprehensive portrait of who's "dishing the dirt on America", as *The Guardian* so eloquently puts it. Now onto the mystery of his newest ex-employee, Adrian Chen.

Bye, bye Adrian!

Last November, Adrian Chen published his final piece for Gawker.com, 'After 30 Years of Silence, The Original NSA Whistle Blower Looks Back'. Ten days later, Chen's boss John Cook suddenly announced Adrian was leaving Gawker for a freelance career.

After 30 Years of Silence is remarkable because in it Chen commits at least three sins according to Langley's playbook: Chen suggests Horowitz has been an intelligence since his Black Panther days; Chen (accidentally) suggests Poitras, Gellman and Greenwald have a US intelligence connection like Horowitz; and finally, Chen mocks the CIA apologists' last refuge: that agency excesses are WASPs' fault.

Prior to these sins, Chen was a model establishment journalist, criticizing Wikileaks and promoting the US intel asset Tor. What made him commit career-seppuku?

Adrian Chen, dancing over the edge of a cliff.

My money's on **ignorance**. I suggest, readers, that in Chen's bull-rush effort to use Perry Fellwock to criticize Snowden's leaks, Chen unwittingly got a little too close to the ugly 1970s political maneuverings of Denton's and Horowitz's political patrons, as well as the ugly 2010s maneuverings of Poitras/Greenwald/Gellman.

Chen's article was okay'd-for-print by John Cook, the chief editor who has since left Gawker for Pierre Omidyar's *The Intercept*. Chen, an ignorant foot soldier, walked the plank. Cook's either been rewarded or given golden handcuffs– time will tell on that one.

Recap: Adrian Chen of Gawker broke with his normal routine of pandering to US intelligence interests when he wrote 'After 30 Years of Silence, The Original NSA Whistle Blower Looks Back'. The article exposed Horowitz as an intelligence agent and suggests that Poitras, Gellman and Greenwald are too. Since the article's publication, both Adrian and John Cook, the editor who approved it, have left Gawker.

If I'm right about why Adrian left Gawker, it means that Gawker and Denton are patronized by the same business interests, Anglo-American business interests, that backed Colby's career so many years ago. (Colby used journalist plants like Horowitz in the 1970s, just as Greenwald et alia are used today. Somebody important at Gawker is just as touchy about outing Horowitz *today* as they are about the Greenwald crew.) The longevity of these business interests is less far-fetched than it sounds, because capital pools have a remarkable persistence– as the old adage says, money begets money.

Adrian Chen's weird career move doesn't benefit Chen, it's a knee-jerk protection of past and present CIA assets. The fact that Gawker moved to protect these assets (they made an example out of Chen), coupled with Denton's 'Cool Britannia' roots, point to Denton being a creature of those business interests which started the OSS and FDR-Churchill-Stephenson's collaboration. These are the same interests that felt threatened by Angleton's files and have pushed a decades-long disinformation campaign about the first CIA Counterintelligence Chief.

Recap: Adrien Chen's sudden departure shows that folks who are important to Gawker were offended by Chen's exposure of David Horowitz and Chen's comparison of Fellwock to Snowden, which by extension suggests Greenwald is CIA like Horowitz was. Being touchy about Horowitz today suggests that Gawker's patronage is the same group that used agent-journalists in the 1970s.

Let's look at the article's sins in more detail.

'After 30 Years of Silence, The Original NSA Whistle Blower Looks Back' strains to compare Snowden's revelations to those of Perry Fellwock, a disillusioned NSA analyst who first spoke out in the early Seventies. Fellwock leaked NSA information to *Ramparts*' David Horowitz and Peter Collier in 1972. Fellwock's leaks were alarmist accounts of the NSA's capabilities against the Soviets. *Ramparts* itself was a Catholic-funded, Soviet-sympathizing publication, so Fellwock's information was

used to discredit US claims of Soviet aggression and paint the NSA in very dark colors.

Perry Fellwock, whose original *Ramparts* article contained info on NSA spying on ally nations, much like Wayne Masden's *Observer* article. Masden's article was pulled after a twitter storm from ex-intelligence types. Jacob Appelbaum repackaged the information in *Der Spiegel* several days later.

After Fellwock made a name for himself by outing the NSA, he began an attack on the CIA through magazine *Counter Spy,* which outed 225 CIA agents around the globe.

Counter Spy is the Institute for Policy Studies (IPS) publication I first mentioned in my article describing Lloyd Shearer's son's KGB connection. That connection is so politically toxic, that David Obst didn't even want to mention Derek or Lloyd Shearer's name in his autobiography. So you see, Chen was playing with fire when he brought up *Counter Spy*.

Chen's article focuses on Perry Fellwock's work for *Counter Spy*. However, Chen doesn't explain IPS in his article. Chen makes it sound like *Counter Spy* was Fellwock's idea, along with radical-turned-capitalist Rennie Davis and Air Force Intelligence officer Jim Butz. **A lot of spooks in the Anti-War movement, weren't there!?**

Recap: Chen's method for smearing Snowden was to compare him to Perry Fellwock, a NSA analyst who ended up working with a KGB-associated magazine, *Counter Spy*. According to Chen, Fellwock first joined the Dark Side by talking to David Horowitz and Peter Collier of *Ramparts*, another Soviet-sympathizing magazine. However, Horowitz (at least) was not a true leftist, but a CIA plant.

How does Chen tie all this old stuff onto Snowden? Adrian Chen makes the claim that Wikileaks is a modern-day *Counter Spy;* that Julian Assange is a modern-day Norman Mailer (Soviet sympathizer); that Horowitz and Collier were intelligence assets who undermined the Fellwock's anti-war work; and that one day Snowden will regret his actions just as Perry Fellwock and Peter Collier regret the *Ramparts* article today.

Needless to say, *After 30 Years of Silence* perpetuates the intelligence-community claim that what little has been revealed by Greenwald/Poitras/Gellman has 'made the US more vulnerable to terrorists'.

On to the unmasking of David Horowitz– Chen quotes Perry Fellwock:

> *"Fellwock told me he believes Collier and Horowitz were never truly part of the left, and that they misused his words purposefully to cause maximum chaos in a demented quest to hurt America.*
>
> *"There was an element within our movement [the Anti-War Movement] that was fundamentally anti-American and wanted to create chaos in America and really disrupt and destroy American society," he [Fellwock] said."*

If Adrian Chen were well-informed, he would have known that qualifying Fellwock's claim was the safest thing to do next, but instead Chen provides information supporting Fellwock's assertion. *Strike One.* This is incredibly dangerous for Chen because it lifts the lid on the big secret: the 1970s scandals were the result of factional US intelligence infighting.

> *Fellwock approached* Ramparts' *editors as colleagues who would help him refine his own story; they saw him as a source, from which to* ***extract a juicy scoop.***

Chen suggests Horowitz *posed* himself to Fellwock this way: he would use Fellwock's NSA revelations to undermine anti-Communist policies and thereby harm the intel community and stop the war. In reality, what Horowitz and Collier revealed only served to harm the US, say Chen/Fellwock. Horowitz is the only participant from whom Chen does not have a quote about regretting the *Ramparts* article and questioning its motives!

> *Today, Collier echoes Fellwock's disdain for the [*Ramparts*] article, with his own motivations. His doubts about the article, he said, beginning before it was even published, helped spur his first steps away from the left. About a month before the NSA story came out, Collier said, his father, a conservative who had argued heatedly with him about his radical politics, died of cancer.*
>
> *"Towards the end, he was dying of cancer and here I was preparing to do this thing," Collier said. "And he loved his country. After I did it, when I was still grieving for him, the thought came into my mind: I said, Oh, God, I betrayed my father's country. This was really my first move out of the left, to understand what my intentions were: To hurt this country, to make it vulnerable, to make it less strong."*

How did Horowitz spin Fellwock's message? According to Fellwock and Chen, Horowitz protected the NSA by twisting Fellwock's message and leaving out an important point:

> *They [Horowitz and Collier] published this rambling interview*

> *that said some things that were true and some other things that weren't true," he [Fellwock] said. "They just turned it into a sensational piece of gossip as far as I was concerned.*

And…

> *Now that Fellwock was coming forward again, even hesitantly, he wanted to do it right. He squinted at a small piece of paper on which he'd written the key points about the NSA he had wanted to get across with his Ramparts article.*
>
> *"Most people in those days thought that the NSA and CIA worked for the U.S. government," he said. "But they don't. They're an entity unto itself, a global entity that is comprised of the Five Eyes." The Five Eyes is the informal name for the intelligence-sharing agreement between the United States, Great Britain, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. "This community operates outside of the Constitution," Fellwock said, "and from everything I've seen, it still does."*

In Chen's rush to paint Fellwock as a misguided, burnt-out "crazy" man– Snowden's future– Chen inadvertently explains David Horowitz's place in the twisted Colby/KGB media leak network, which Colby used so effectively. Horowitz was there to turn intelligence leaks into factually-questionable, juicy scoops.

Recap: Chen paints Fellwock as a well meaning stooge, who trusted Horowitz and Collier with NSA secrets. Horowitz spun the NSA information in a way that was factually incorrect and left out important points. Horowitz turned important revelations into entertainment that protected the CIA and hurt the USA.

Does it make sense that the CIA should have an agent like Horowitz at *Ramparts* in 1972? Yes, it does. According to Francis Stonor Saunders in her book *The Cultural Cold War*, *Ramparts* had come to the attention of the Johnson administration six years previously (1966), when Peter Jessup explicitly told Richard Helms (CIA head) that *Ramparts* needed CIA attention. That's plenty of time to place or turn an agent(s) at the publication.

Chen spends a lot of time building Fellwock into Snowden, and building Horowitz up into an unprincipled intelligence agent. To be fair, neither Fellwock nor Chen says 'Horowitz is a CIA agent', however, it's pretty much an open secret that Horowitz is, *at least*, a CIA operative. Horowitz's career follows the path of many 'non-communist lefters' who ended up working for Langley since WWII.

If Fellwock is Snowden, and Horowitz is CIA, then what does that make Laura Poitras? OOOPS! *Yeah, Chen, I feel your pain!*

You'll also notice that Chen doesn't explicitly make the connection between secret agent Horowitz and secret agents Poitras/Greenwald /Gellman. He doesn't do that because such comparisons would undermine his argument: that Snowden is an anti-American tool like Fellwock was. Although the Horowitz/Poitras connection isn't explicit, it's an unavoidable conclusion from the rest of Chen's argument. That sort of thinking is *way too dangerous* for a gossip mag like Gawker. *Strike two, Adrian.*

Recap: Chen trips over himself with this Snowden=Fellwock=Remorse analogy, because the analogy equates Horowitz, the untrustworthy intelligence agent, with Glenn Greenwald, Poitras, Gellman.

I'm going to wrap this one up with that nasty old racial meme: the CIA/NSA/FBI are just a old bunch of white guys screwing over the world because of their evilocity. This meme is the hiding place of last resort for every OSS/CIA/GCHQ apologist since H. Montgomery Hyde and *The Quiet Canadian.*

After calling Norman Mailer out as a ridiculous drunk, Chen quotes Perry Fellwock with the following:

> *"What Mailer told me is that the CIA is basically a white Christian Protestant organization," Fellwock said. "And white Christian Protestants have to find a devil in order to justify what they do. Their Christian values say they should help the poor, like the Communists were. But they were not helping the poor. They were helping the very rich. And this created a conflict inside of the white Christian Protestant mind that could only be resolved by them seeking out a devil and making that devil into an exaggerated thing. Thus, they exaggerated the threat of communism just like they're exaggerating the threat of Islam today."*

Now Adrian, listen well. The evil WASP cabal behind the CIA is actually a very useful political tool which you shouldn't make light of. *A lot* of time and money has been spent to hone that legend just right, as anyone who has read the MKUltra files well knows. Don't bite the hand that feeds you, Adrian– but horse is already out, isn't it? *Strike Three!*

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April 2014
March 2014
February 2014
January 2014
December 2013
November 2013
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May 2013
April 2013
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